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**Broken to Beauty**

**Big Idea of the Series:** This 3-week serieswill cover how to cope and get beyond being hurt. It will give us God’s perspective on how to live free and have joy in a broken and hurting world (including our own).

**Week 1**

**Text:** Matthew 11:28-30

**Topic:** Healing in God

**Big Idea of the Message:** How do we overcome the hurt and walk in the fullness and beauty of Jesus Christ?

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. **After Being Hurt, How Might We Live/Act Differently?**

We may develop trust issues; become depressed; we may close and cut ourselves off from people and the world around us; develop self-destructive behaviors and habits; live in fear or always expecting bad things to happen. *Proverbs 6:27: “Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?”*

This is why people grasp for false comforts – Money, possessions, food, drugs, sex, sports, religion, alcohol, movie stars, musicians, etc.…trying to find comfort from the pain. But when you strip those away - the comfort starts to fade, but the pain, the hurt, the fear re-intensifies – so people grasp at the next thing to ease the pain.

*1 John 2:16: “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world.” 1 Peter 2:11: “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.”*

If you truly want to change, you cannot change you. Every pseudo-change you make is only temporary, and it does not correct the eternal problem – your sin. The changes that we make to ourselves are only band-aids over a severed artery. You must surrender your life to Jesus so that He can change you and truly free you from the hurt.

1. **How Do We Go from Broken to Beauty?** It all depends on the perspective we choose to embrace. Will we choose to see the events which left us broken as the catalyst for us to give up, use it as an excuse as to why we can’t, or why we shouldn’t, or will we choose the perspective that stands with God’s truth.

That He works all things together for good - that He gives beauty for ashes - that He makes all things beautiful in their time. That He will take our brokenness (if we will give it to Him) and use it to refine and transform our hearts. This will make us a more beautiful offering with an even more beautiful testimony of His love, grace, and redemptive power. To reach the other side of broken, we must choose to allow God to bridge the healing gap to the other side of the broken.

We all have broken places, but do we sit and wallow in those broken places? Or do we step out of the broken - into the healing hands of God; allowing Him to mend and restore, and to use our scar stories to help point other broken people in the direction of the One who makes all things beautiful?

To show them that to get across the gap from broken to beauty, the cross must be placed there to fill the gap of wretchedness to righteousness. We must grant God permission into our broken places. Unlike the enemy, God will not force Himself or His will upon us. He wills to totally restore what the enemy has stolen.

He wills to make our broken places whole, but we must choose to allow Him access to our hearts. He will do the healing, but we must fully surrender ourselves over to His care. For any of us to have a life that God intended for us, then the beauty of Christ must come and overtake the brokenness of fallen people.

1. **Sadly, Most Choose to Stay Broken**: Many choose to stay in the broken, because the broken is familiar, it is what they know, it becomes their pseudo-comfort zone. Stepping out with God is unknown, it is uncomfortable, and He will likely require of us something that we do not want to do. It is hard, and the healing process with God brings about the pain that we have been so desperately trying to avoid and pretend away. That is why it is called FAITH!

You must allow God to heal the broken places and restore their intended beauty for which they were created. But it depends upon you.

*“One Easter Sunday morning, a pastor came to the Church carrying a rusty, bent, old bird cage, and set it by the pulpit. Several eyebrows were raised and, as if in response, the pastor began to speak. "I was walking through town yesterday when I saw a young boy coming toward me, swinging this bird cage.*

*On the bottom of the cage were three little wild birds, shivering with cold and fright. I stopped the lad and asked, "What you got there son?" "Just some old birds," came the reply. "What are you gonna do with them?" I asked. "Take 'em home and have fun with 'em. I'm gonna tease 'em and pull out their feathers to make 'em fight. I'm gonna have a real good time." "But you'll get tired of those birds sooner or later. What will you do then?"*

*"Oh, I got some cats. They like birds. I'll take 'em to them." The pastor was silent for a moment. "How much do you want for those birds, son?" "Huh??!!! Why, you don't want them birds, mister. They're just plain old field birds. They don't sing - they ain't even pretty!" "How much?" The boy sized up the pastor as if he were crazy and said, "$10?".*

*The pastor reached in his pocket and took out a ten-dollar bill. He placed it in the boy's hand. In a flash, the boy was gone. The pastor picked up the cage and gently carried it to the end of the alley where there was a tree and a grassy spot. Setting the cage down, he opened the door, and by softly tapping the bars persuaded the birds out, setting them free.*

*Well, that explained the empty bird cage on the pulpit, and then the pastor began to tell this story. One day Satan and Jesus were having a conversation. Satan had just come from the Garden of Eden, and he was gloating and boasting. "Yes, sir, I just caught the world full of people down there. Set me a trap, used bait I knew they couldn't resist. Got 'em all!"*

*"What are you going to do with them?" Jesus asked. "Oh, I'm gonna have fun! I'm gonna teach them how to marry and divorce each other. How to hate and abuse each other. How to drink and smoke and curse. How to invent guns and bombs and kill each other. I'm really gonna have fun!"*

*"And what will you do when you get done with them?", Jesus asked. "Oh, I'll kill 'em." "How much do you want for them?" "Oh, you don't want those people. They ain't no good. Why, you take them, and they'll just hate you? They'll spit on you, curse you and kill you!! You don't want those people!!"*

*"How much?" Satan looked at Jesus and sneered, "All your tears, and all your blood." Jesus paid the price. The pastor picked up the cage he opened the door and he walked from the pulpit.”*

**Message LifePoint**: When you break a bone, there is much pain in the healing process of that bone – but the place where the brokenness occurred is made stronger and is not likely to break there again.

*Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

We find rest, peace, beauty and restoration in the healing arms of Christ. He heals the broken, mends the hurts, takes our baggage and gives us new life.

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**Week 2**

**Text:** John 5:1-7

**Topic:** Healing in God

**Big Idea of the Message:** Do you want to be made well? We would say yes, absolutely, but do we, do we really?

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. **Do You Want to Be Made Well?** *John 5:1-7: “After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him,* ***“Do you want to be made well?”*** *The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”*

How strange indeed to ask a cripple if they want to be made well. This seems like a no-brainer. Of course, he wants to be made well. Wouldn't you want to be made well if you were crippled or had some sort of debilitating infirmity? It seems like such a silly question, yet, here is our Jesus, asking this man the question - does He want to be healed? Such a question may seem strange or even a little silly to you or me, but to our all-knowing Lord, it is a very sound and pertinent question. Is He testing this man's faith? Maybe.

Because without faith, we know it is impossible to please God, and it is by faith that we are made well. However, this question goes much deeper than faith in God's power itself.

Does this crippled man want to be made well, or is he comfortable with the way things have always been? Does he want to be ripped out of his comfort zone, forcing him into unknown territory of having to work and provide for himself, or would he rather stay with what is familiar? Where things are easy, where little is required of him, where he knows what to expect. Living off whatever some passerby throws to him out of compassion. Is he comfortable in the attention and sympathy he receives?

A cripple is who he has been most, if not all his life. It is his identity. It is all he knows. Losing that means he would have to find himself in something or someone else, which undoubtedly would bring fears, doubts, and insecurities. Does he want to be made well?

1. **We All Need to Be Made Well**: We all do the same things in life. We hold on to the broken pieces instead of giving them to the Savior who can mend and make them whole. We would rather God paint the cracked statue that we are instead of melting us down and reforming us on the Potter’s table. We can see his heart condition in his response to our Lord.

*“Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”* Does he say, “Yes, I want to be made well. I want to change. I want to be healed. Take me to the water and wait there with me. When it stirs, place me in the water and I will be healed.” No... he makes an excuse. Do we truly want to be made well? In a way, we are all crippled. We are crippled by an infection called sin. Our hearts and our thoughts are distorted by sin and need to be made well, to be sanctified, which means to be made holy.

Do we want to change, to grow in Christ and be conformed into His image? Do we want to live a life of sacrifice, denying ourselves, surrendering to God’s plan and will? Do we want to obey God in whatever He is leading for us to do for His Kingdom? Are we willing to step outside of the comfort zones we have been unsuccessfully trying to preserve ourselves in, in order for God to make us into the person He uniquely designed us to be for His purpose and pleasure - or do we just like the idea of being made well?

1. **Do You Want it or the Idea of It?** Do we want to truly be made well or do we just like the idea of being made well? Fast forward to the cross for a minute and the two thieves hanging there with Jesus.

One wanted Jesus to get him out of his predicament (to get him down from the cross) and the other wanted to be made well (to be forgiven, made whole and gaining true life while losing his physical one.) Many people only look to Christ to get them out of the circumstance, not to be made well permanently. Most want live a life without sacrifice, without denying themselves, without surrendering to God’s plan and will – but still expect the benefits of God’s grace.

**Message LifePoint**: So, are we truly protecting ourselves by remaining in our pseudo-comforts, or are will just fooling ourselves? Much like the crippled man, what excuse or excuses might you be resting in rather than stepping out with your Lord and experiencing His restorative power in your heart and life?

The Lord's question to this crippled man is not strange at all, and in fact, is a question each one of us needs to ask ourselves, and answer truthfully, before moving on from this point. *Luke 12:48: "...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required;"*

Do we step into the unknown, where much will be required of us, where we will be stretched (painfully at times) or do we stay right where we are, in our safe comfortable bubble, doing just enough to get by? To whom much is given, much is required, and the further we step into and walk in God's healing truth, the more He will require of us for the service to those He loves – for the growth of His Kingdom. We are either all in, or not at all. There are no fence sitters in Christ. Ask yourself. Do I? Do I truly want to be made well?

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**Week 3 - Conclusion**

**Text:** Matthew 11:28-30 & John 5:1-7

**Topic:** Being Made Whole

**Big Idea of the Message:** How to stay and live on the other side of brokenness? What does Scripture show us on how to live beyond the hurt and misery? How do we endure, and what happens to us after the pain subsides?

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. **You Must be Willing**: To live on the other side of broken means that we must be willing to take the hand of the One and only One who is more than able to take us to the other side. And much like any healing journey, it is going to take time. It is not going to be easy, but “We do not grow in easy.” – S. Gorman

The beautiful thing about our God is that, He will never ask or require us to do anything that He is not already in the midst of, working for our good and providing for our every need. He is guiding us along His path, strengthening our hearts, and fighting on our behalf. Anything God asks or requires of us will result in our victory because Jesus died to give us that victory, and the only requirement He has, is for us to willingly surrender to His plan and will, and obey whatever He leads, trusting that He is God.

As heart-breaking as it is, many truly do not want to be made well. But for those of us who do, we have a faithful God before us to pave the way straight, behind us to wipe our slate clean, and all around us to protect, strengthen, and guide us to ensure the victory that we most certainly have in and because of His Son Jesus Christ.

1. **Your Outlook Must Change**: How many mornings have rolled out of bed and the first thing you do is start to worry about issues that just will not go away? You cannot get around the fact that this or that issue has not been resolved and it just drives you insane.

Why not make your first thought something like, “God has blessed me with this day, and He will provide, guide, and support me through any and all situations that arise? He is my Father and I am His child and He will never leave or forsake me.” We all have our ups and downs, but when you do not worry and let God have full control over the situation, the problem will take care of itself because the Lord handles it the right way.

In John 14:6, Jesus proclaims that He is the only way to the Father, the only way to Heaven, the only truth, the only way to peace in your life, and the only way to climb out of any struggle you are caught up in. That is reassuring to know that you have a Creator, Mentor, Father, and Best Friend that will walk with you each step of your life.

*“A young man was at the end of his rope. Seeing no way out, he dropped to his knees in prayer. "Lord, I can't go on," he said, "I have too heavy of a cross to bear." The Lord replied, "My son, if you can't bear its weight, just place your cross inside this room. Then, open that other door and pick out any cross you wish."*

*The man was filled with relief and said, "Thank you, Lord," and he did as he was told. Upon entering the other door, he saw many crosses, some so large the tops were not visible. Then, he spotted a tiny cross leaning against a far wall. "I'd like that one, Lord," he whispered.*

*And the Lord replied, "My son, that is the cross you just brought in." When life's problems seem overwhelming, it helps to look around and see what other people are coping with. You may consider yourself far more fortunate than you imagined.”*

1. **Sit at the Feet of Jesus**: The hurt must meet the Healer. We would stop banging our heads on the mantle of our lives if we would listen to the Lord and go sit at His feet. We should always focus on God, but as human beings and the billions of distractions that are thrown at us every day, it can be very difficult. That is the beauty of the love of Christ. No matter how many times we screw up, backslide, or do something stupid, He is always right behind us waiting for us to fall into his loving arms.

**Message LifePoint**: Do you want to be made well? If you are struggling, hurting, or needing guidance – PRAY. Talk to God as your best friend, as your Father. He already knows what you need, He is just waiting for you to ask for it. Just remember that He will do things in His time and His will, not ours. We must keep Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior first in our lives. Then He will show us the way out of any struggle that we endure.

When no one else will listen, He will. When you have no comfort, turn to His Comforter who lives within you. When you trust no one, He is the One you lean on. The inseparable love of Jesus Christ is the safest place that human beings can run to. His perfectness covers our imperfections. His faith remedies the unfaithfulness we at times have in Him. Jesus took the three nails, the scars, and the crown on the cross; taking the first step toward ascension to heaven for all of us.

The beauty amid these broken ruins; His grace and powerful intervention must change us to the point where true believers are almost beyond recognition to this world. Where broken becomes beautiful. One day we will finally, totally be perfected as Christ is. We will truly be Holy as He is holy. We will truly be made well. We will be flawless and complete. There truly is beauty on the other side of brokenness – You just have to ask the Lord Jesus Christ to take you there.